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ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities seeking accreditation by the Commission of Higher Education of the Middle States Association must conduct a formal self-study, prior to the evaluation visit by a team from member institutions. Typically a year-long process, the self-study should involve students, faculty, administration, governing board, and community. Although usually comprehensive, this evaluation may emphasize certain personnel, teaching methods, research programs, and so on. After a preliminary visit from a Middle States Representative, the institution should define topics for detailed study, establish a steering committee, establish and monitor progress of work groups, and compile their work into a final report which should be sent to each evaluation team member four to six weeks before their visit. A hypothetical comprehensive self-study is outlined according to recommended topics for detailed study: goals and objectives; outcomes; curriculum; admissions policy and counseling services; faculty; instruction; resources (buildings, equipment, funds); and organization, governance and financial policy. (CP)

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# HANDBOOK FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

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## FOREWORD

This handbook presents in summary form the essential background information which should be clearly understood by faculty members, students, and administrators involved in institutional self-study as part of the accrediting process conducted by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

A detailed presentation of Commission policies, practices and procedures is contained in another handbook entitled ***Policies and Procedures of the Commission on Higher Education.*** Particular attention is called to the statement, "Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education" which, together with this Handbook, serves as the foundation for institutional self-study and evaluation.

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PART I

# THE MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITING PROCESS AND INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

## A. The Accrediting Process

Middle States accreditation involves a long-range process designed to help an institution analyze its functions, appraise its educational effectiveness, and discover means by which its work can be strengthened. Institutional improvement is the objective, and the accrediting process should facilitate the attainment of that goal rather than make accreditation an end in itself. Accreditation is simply a recognition, after evaluation, that in the judgment of peers an institution is providing the quality of educational services which society and the educational world have a right to expect of it.

The accrediting process has evolved within the educational community in the United States as a means of sustaining concern for quality within that community and of recognizing its accountability to the general public. By accepting membership in the Middle States Association, institutions impose upon themselves the obligation of on-going assessment of their work and of periodic submission of that assessment to the scrutiny of peers.

Accordingly, the Commission on Higher Education requires every candidate and member institution preparing for an evaluation visit to make an intensive study of its educational endeavors. The period of preparation usually lasts at least a year and often more, and is characterized by the involvement in analysis and discussion of as many members of a campus community as feasible. Such general involvement is essential in the Commission's view, since two major benefits of self-study depend upon it: a) the feeding into institutional decision-making of information, ideas, and judgments from as many campus people as possible; and b) a deepened understanding of an institution as a whole by everyone connected with it. Methods of achieving wide campus participation in self-study necessarily vary from institution to institution; but the Commission urges that every institution, however large and complex or however small and informally structured, devise appropriate means of organizing its constituents to this end.

Another element in the accrediting process is an evaluation visit to a campus by a team of experienced academic colleagues from other institutions. Their primary function is to study an institution's analysis of its own work in the light of the facts as they see them and to give the institution the views of competent outsiders on the validity of that self-analysis. The visiting team's function is really to serve as consultants who provide a type of informed, searching analysis which is almost unobtainable otherwise. It is a healthy sign when their work can be predominantly corroboration of an institution's own findings, and a cause for serious concern when they identify major problems undetected by the institution.

The focus of the team's attention is primarily the intellectual work of an institution. Organization, administration, facilities, and resources are examined for their effect on teaching and learning. The Commission on Higher Education has no prescriptive criteria or favorite patterns in any of these areas. A team centers its attention on the educational impact of an institution, assessing everything by its contribution to the purposes for which the institution exists. The team's report, written for the institution, does not therefore describe what is being done; what the institution needs to know is the team's reaction to what it is doing and to its analysis of the educational effectiveness of that work.

The Commission studies all materials relevant to an evaluation visit so that it can form its own conclusions on the quality of an institution's performance. It examines the institution's self-

study document, the evaluation team report and the institution's formal response to that report. The Commission's judgment is then expressed in terms of an accreditation decision.

The accrediting process is most effective when it stimulates continuing self-analysis within an institution. The Commission often helps by suggesting follow-up reports on issues of major concern. Action on accreditation is sometimes deferred until such reports of accomplishment have been received, in order to give the institution maximum leverage in its program of self-development.

By means of the accrediting process, the Commission on Higher Education seeks to realize one of the primary purposes of the Middle States Association, the improvement of educational institutions. The self-study carried out by institutions and the constructive interaction of many members of the academic community engaged in the Commission's accrediting activities contribute directly to this end.

## B. General Principles for Self-Study

The Commission subscribes to the following principles in regard to institutional self-study:

### 1. Definition of Self-Study

Self-study is an analysis of an institution's educational resources and effectiveness by its own staff. It is the part of the Middle States evaluation procedure which has primary importance for the institution. In a self-study, students, faculty, administration, and governing board are able to appraise their institution's accomplishments and potential in light of what they wish the institution to be. Working with the Commission and its staff, they define the context in which the institution is to be examined and reveal their own level of expectations. The undertaking of a well-planned and clearly focused self-study should result in a common effort to analyze and then to improve the institution.

Benefits are, of course, proportional to the incisiveness of the inquiry: its aim must be to understand, evaluate and improve, not simply to defend. The fact that an evaluation team visit is to follow gives the self-study added impetus, but the views of the visiting team should, ideally, merely sharpen its impact.

Through the process of self-study an institution mobilizes the various elements of its academic community to reflect on the purposes and effectiveness of the institution, to examine its strengths as well as its weaknesses and, ***where problems or opportunities are identified, to begin work toward their solution or fulfillment.***

### 2. Approach to Self-Study

Because institutions are different, because situations change over time, and because external influence and internal conditions vary on every campus, several approaches to self-study and evaluation are available.

The most useful approach is one attuned to the current order of institutional priorities. An institution should not be expected to set aside important internal

priorities and problems in order to undergo the accreditation review process.

The approach selected should utilize recent or current institutional research of self-evaluation, if it has been done satisfactorily. The institution should not be expected to duplicate any evaluative activity it has recently completed.

The approach chosen must be sufficiently general and must be carried out with appropriate depth and enough access to basic information to permit the Commission to fulfill its responsibility of holding an institution accountable to its stated objectives. To the fullest extent possible, assessment of that accountability should focus on the results of an institution's educational program and their implications for its other procedures and processes.

The self-study approach selected should involve as many people as possible on the campus and, in appropriate situations, people from off the campus.

The approach utilized should yield at some appropriate time a concise, readable, but substantial document to be used for internal planning by trustees, faculty members, administrators, and students as well as for informational use by outside agencies. This document must get beyond description and dwell extensively on analysis, interpretation, and proposals for action.

One of the goals of the approach chosen should be to foster on-going self-study and planning at the institution. What happens on a continuous basis after the evaluation is finished is as important to the Commission as the accountability and short-range improvement aspects of the process.

### 3. Forms of Self-Study

An institution seeking initial accreditation must use the Comprehensive Self-Study described below as part of the evaluation process. The self-study form for a re-evaluation depends on current circumstances, particularly upon the degree to which an institution makes habitual and skillful use of self-study techniques on its own accord. Institutions are invited to discuss the possibilities with a member of the Commission's staff well in advance of the anticipated date of evaluation.

Five basic forms of self study are available. ***Other forms are possible, however, and may be developed in consultation with the Commission staff.***

a. **COMPREHENSIVE:** the most common type of institutional review, in which every major aspect of program, governing and supporting structures, resources and services, and educational outcomes is appraised in relation to an institution's self-defined objectives.

   A comprehensive self-study is usually the desirable one unless an institution has recently conducted a thorough and comprehensive self-evaluation on its own or has a regular program of internal institutional research which would render this approach repetitious or unprofitable.

Part II of this handbook may be used as a guide for comprehensive self-study, but institutions are encouraged to develop a freely-designed narrative report, supported by the necessary factual data presented in a concise and readable form.

If an institution holds or desires accreditation by specialized agencies as well as by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, a joint visit can often be arranged and should be considered. A single self-study document may serve in such instances.

b. **COMPREHENSIVE WITH CERTAIN EMPHASES:** a variant of the basic comprehensive self-study, useful for institutions wishing to give special attention to selected areas or issues within the context of their overall objectives and performance. This form involves a general review of objectives, program, and supporting elements, followed by an examination in depth of those aspects which are of primary significance to an institution at a given time. An institution might find it useful, for example, to place special emphasis in its self-study on its charter and trustees, its faculty and teaching practices, and/or on the outcomes of its total operation.

The self-study report should cover both the general and the in-depth phases of this plan. Part II of the ***Handbook for Institutional Self-Study*** may be used as a basis for the general part, or the institution may create its own format. The analysis of and report on the special emphases may be presented in whatever manner is appropriate. The visiting team will give particular attention to the special emphases, within an examination of the institution as a whole.

c. **SELECTED TOPICS:** concentration upon certain areas, units, or aspects of an institution, when the basic accreditability of an institution can be readily verified through available information and when intensive study of selected functions or parts or chosen aspects of its work promises to be illuminating of the whole, and more profitable to the institution.

After discussion with the Commission's staff, the institution should present, early in the self-study period, a detailed plan of action for approval. The self-study will then need to produce (a) a relatively brief introductory paper setting forth the institution's aims and objectives, describing its organization, programs, resources, and outcomes, and providing such quantitative data as are necessary; and (b) information in depth on the chosen areas or topics. The visiting team will be selected accordingly and instructed to develop from the special topics a view of the institution as a whole.

d. **CURRENT SPECIAL STUDY:** an institution making or about to make a comprehensive and intensive study of its educational program for curriculum revision, long-range educational planning, or similar purposes

may wish to request that such a study be used in place of a more conventional form of self-study. This may be done if adequate information on background and outcomes is available. After discussion with a member of the Commission's staff, a detailed proposal should be presented, with evidence of the institution's ability to carry it out effectively, or with evidence that it has been a serious enterprise if already completed. A specially constructed visiting team will be chosen, which will usually visit after the completion of the study.

e. **REGULAR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH:** acceptance of the product of an institution's regular program of institutional research in fulfillment of the self-study requirement, without further documentation other than an introductory statement.

Such a procedure will be considered only when institutional research covering the general range and outcomes of an institution's programs is a significant part of its established procedures. The Commission will appoint a small committee to examine the materials and to decide whether more information or an extended visit is needed.

#### 4. Timing of Self-Study

A self-study is a major enterprise. If done well it is abundantly rewarding, but it is not worth the effort if it has to be rushed. It is an educational program,and there is a point beyond which education cannot be hurried. A full academic year is the minimum working time needed, and preparation should normally begin at least three semesters before the date of the visit. Two years gives a better margin. A well-planned Middle States evaluation and its normal follow-up processes usually spread over a two-to-four-year period.

It is not necessary to spend large amounts of money on self-study. Certain data have to be assembled, but they are of a kind which ought to be readily available internally; if they are not, compiling them should be looked upon as a routine cost. The data need not be translated into or collected over again in the particular form and terminology a Commission document suggests, if the form an institution already uses serves the purpose of the inquiry.

### C. Self-Study Activities on Campus

#### 1. Preliminary Visit from a Commission Staff Member

About two years before a regularly scheduled evaluation, one of the Commission's staff members contacts the chief administrative officer of the institution to arrange for on-campus discussions of the self-study process. This preliminary staff visit is designed to: a) acquaint as many people as feasible with the purposes and the procedures of evaluation; b) give campus people an opportunity for first-hand discussion with a Middle States representative; and c) enable the staff member and the chief administrators to agree on such matters as the timing of the evaluation visit, the nature and scope of the projected self-study, and the professional

backgrounds especially suitable for representation on the evaluation team.

The chief administrative officer is asked to arrange meetings with persons and groups who will be closely connected with self-study activities on campus. The Commission staff finds it useful, for example, to speak with the chief administrative officers, the steering committee for the self-study or a group from which this committee will probably be drawn, the entire faculty or a representative faculty group, and some students. It is also helpful to meet with at least some trustees, when such a meeting can be arranged.

It is important that campus people understand that the visiting staff member is not an evaluator. The sole purpose of his or her visit is to discuss preparation for and procedures of self-study and evaluation.

### 2. Definition of the Nature and Scope of Self-Study

The areas of institutional activity analyzed in preparation for an evaluation visit should in most cases be comprehensive in scope. Few parts of the institutional whole can be adequately evaluated in isolation. Ordinarily, institutions should structure their self-study activities to provide for in-depth analysis of:

a. Purpose and Objectives
b. Outcomes
c. Program
d. Faculty
e. Organization and Administration
f. Board of Trustees
g. Admissions and Student Services
h. Resources
i. Library/ Learning Resources Center
j. Plant and Equipment
k. Financing and Accounting

A discussion of these items is available in the Commission's basic policy statement, ***Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.*** The first and second items are especially important as touchstones for all the rest.

Current needs and/or concerns at an institution may direct emphasis to particular aspects of institutional activity. In fact, given the Commission's hope that preparation for an evaluation visit will increasingly be simply an intensification of an institution's on-going self-study and planning, emphasis on immediate problem areas is to be expected. Such emphases, however, can only be properly interpreted within the context of institutional activity as a whole. The balance of general and specific concerns within self-study activities is accordingly a primary question.

Another important element to be considered is the availability of recent or current reports done for purposes other than Middle States evaluation. All such reports, as well as material routinely gathered in offices and academic units on campus, can profitably be directed to appropriate committees and incorporated into the self-study effort. The institution should not duplicate any evaluative activity it has recently completed or fail to utilize any in progress.

The following questions may be useful as a conceptual framework for designing a self-study:

a. What are this institution's objectives and what educational obligations has it assumed?

b. Are these objectives appropriate to it in its present time and place and for its present constituencies?

c. Are all the institution's activities consistent with its objectives?

d. Are its programs and activities designed to achieve those objectives?

e. Is there solid evidence that its objectives are being achieved?

f. Are the human, physical, and fiscal resources needed to achieve institutional objectives available now? Are they likely to be available for the foreseeable future?

### 3. Establishment of a Steering Committee, Timetable, and Work Groups

A steering committee should be established to plan and oversee the entire self-study project. A small steering committee usually works better than a large one. Its members can be appointed and/or elected, and they should be representative of the total institution. Some institutions judge it unwise simply to appoint an existing standing committee to the tasks of the steering committee. New combinations of insights and judgments are usually sought in self-study. On the other hand, an existing committee, one, for example, on institutional research or on long-range planning, could function satisfactorily as a steering committee, and the Commission recognizes the complete freedom of an institution to make use of such groups.

What is essential, whatever its composition, is that a steering committee have the skills and the authority to carry out its primary duties, which include:

a. **Defining the general structure of and the timetable for the self-study effort.**

Adopt a definite timetable; make it generous, but insist on maintaining it. Plan backward. Set a publication date for the self-study report at least eight weeks before the evaluation team is due to arrive so that it can be in team members' hands four to six weeks before the visit. Having determined the finish date, allow a month preceding that for final editing and duplicating. Then work back toward the beginning, allowing the necessary intervals for each stage.

Remember in estimating time allowances what a major undertaking this is and how many people will be involved. Self-study must deal with the separate phases of the institution's life; but it must go beyond them in its concern with their relationships, with the focusing or directing of the institution's total effort, with its over-all educational impact as well as with the effectiveness of each of its units. That takes time.

b. **Establishing appropriate work groups and providing a clear mandate for each.**

Having defined the areas for study, establish self-study groups to address each of them. Most task forces, committees, study groups — whatever the title assigned them — ideally represent cross-sections of the campus community, although not all groups need equally broad representation. The number of committees and the size of each will naturally vary from campus to campus, as will the methods of appointing committee members.

Keep the number of committees or task forces to a reasonable number, using existing committees if possible and appropriate. Do not "committee" people to the point where self-study becomes a burden and the constructive benefits are diminished or lost. Not all committees should start work at the same time; those working on objectives and on outcomes usually need some lead time, in order that their work as it develops may provide guidance for other committees. Organize the study committees so that finally their work represents the entire institution.

Provide for every self-study group both a clear assignment and a schedule for the submission of its interim and final reports. In the directives to each group make clear that its assignment requires description of the specified area, documented analysis of strengths and problems in that area, and proposals for building on strengths and addressing problems. Committees should understand that they are charged not with finding definitive solutions for every problem, but rather with proposing possible courses of action which might lead to solutions.

Encourage all committees to be skeptical, to question and debate. One of the results of the self-study should be a broader knowledge of educational principles and a clearer understanding of their application to the specific objectives of the institution.

***As soon as the nature and scope of the self-study, the membership of the various committees, and the timetable have been established, copies of relevant outlines and schedules should be sent to the Commission staff member who visited the campus.***

c. **Examining interim reports from each work group and, when appropriate, directing reports to other work groups, arranging for general discussion of them, encouraging campus publicity for them, etc.**

Among the most valuable benefits of self-study is a deepened understanding of institutional purposes, opportunities and problems by the campus community. The process, used effectively, constitutes a kind of institutional consciousness-raising. Not every person acquires the same degree of insight, of course, and it is impossible to measure totally the effects actually achieved; but this intangible result of intensive self-study is one most universally appreciated by institutions.

To ensure such gains, a steering committee throughout the period of self-study must devise and encourage others to devise as many means of disseminating information and of stimulating discussion as it can. Campus newspaper articles, special bulletins, minutes of committee meetings, interim reports, results of questionnaires — all such materials can be given wide circulation. Open committee meetings, joint committee meetings, campus "town-meetings" can be scheduled. Interim reports from one committee can be made available to other committees. Each institution should determine the means of fostering communication and discussion that are best suited to its particular campus climate and style.

As the work progresses, see that the committees or task forces work steadily on their assignments and report to the steering committee for coordination. The steering committee should supply ideas, suggest useful cross-references, and from time to time keep the entire administration and faculty informed of the self-study's progress.

In responding to interim reports from committees, provide the help of critical comment. If the data presented lack sufficient context, if statistics are not interpreted and their significance discussed, these omissions should be pointed out when the steering committee responds to the interim report. Keep pressure on all the study groups to simplify, clarify, and distill their findings, to avoid cliches, and to analyze their data.

Throughout the entire period of self-study the steering committee will be active, providing leadership, reacting constructively to the ongoing work of the task forces, working for effective interaction among campus groups, overseeing the development of the self-study project as a whole.

Some steering committees have found it useful to keep a cumulative record of all campus activities related to self-study, so that an accurate summary of the total process can be written on its completion.

d. **Editing (or arranging for the editing) of the self-study report.**

The total bulk of materials produced by the self-study work groups must be reduced to what busy people can really be expected to read and study. One hundred typewritten pages (200 if double spaced) is the maximum total length the Middle States Commission on Higher Education will accept. Volume is less important than substance, and brevity with substance is ideal.

The self-study report in its final form should be a concise, readable, but substantial document to be used for internal planning by trustees, faculty members, administrators, and students as well as for informational use by outside groups like a Middle States evaluating team. Its service to the latter is to provide a point of departure for its work.

Through it the institution says in effect to its visitors: "Here, as clearly and candidly as we can describe and analyze ourselves, is what we are and what we intend to be. Now study us, and give us your reactions. How accurately have we appraised our accomplishments? Where are the resources or the means inadequate? If you were in our place, what would you do differently?"

Clearly, there is no one best way of organizing and writing such a document. It is pointless to ask how another institution has done it. Indeed, it is apt to be a handicap to do so, for what the Commission on Higher Education is looking for is an institution's own sense of purpose and honest assessment of progress, its perspicacity, its style. The quality of the self-study report will in itself tell outsiders a great deal about an institution.

Every self-study document, whatever its organizational pattern, should include the institutional data summary currently on file with the Commission. At some point in the document, too, the director of self-study activities and the people who participated significantly in them should be identified.

The report should also indicate who wrote it and who gave it final approval. It is important that the final draft be discussed by administrators and faculty, and that acceptance of the document be general. Ultimately, the faculty, administration, and governing board take responsibility for the entire report.

Four to six weeks before an evaluation visit, the institution should mail to all members of the team the self-study document, a catalog, a faculty handbook, and a student handbook. Other materials may also be sent; but to reduce the bulk of these mailings, it is helpful to collect specific exhibits, files of minutes, etc. in the team's meeting room on campus. A list of the materials which will be available there should be included in the initial mailing to team members.

At the same time materials are mailed to team members, the institution should also mail two copies of the self-study materials to the Commission office.

### 4. The Evaluation Team Visit

Several months before an evaluation visit the Commission names an evaluation team, usually composed of six to ten members. The precise time for the visit is agreed upon by the team chairman and the institution. The team, comprised chiefly of academic personnel from the Middle States Association's member institutions and chosen especially for competencies relevant to the institution being visited, addresses itself to an on-site review based upon the self-study report and supporting material supplied by the institution. The team's major assignment is to make a considered group judgment, as informed colleagues, on the institution's educational effectiveness viewed in the light of its stated objectives.

PART II

## SUGGESTED STARTING POINTS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION IN SELF-STUDY WORK GROUPS

## SUGGESTED STARTING POINTS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION IN SELF-STUDY WORK GROUPS

The material in this section is designed to suggest the range and the dimensions of a ***hypothetical, comprehensive*** self-study. It should be approached in conjunction with careful study of ***Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education***, a document published by the Commission on Higher Education.

Precisely because it is hypothetical, a self-study document resulting from prescriptive use of this material would describe no existing institution. Naturally, not every topic discussed or issue raised in the following pages will be relevant for every institution. Used imaginatively and freely, however, this section will, it is hoped, help each institution involved in comprehensive self-study discover the emphases and the format for the report which will best serve its own needs.

With appropriate adjustments, parts of this section may also be of some value to institutions using other approaches to self-study.

### A. Goals and Objectives

An institution should know its specific purposes in receiving students and its practical objectives in offering them the opportunities of its particular educational program. Ideally, its statement of objectives will reveal the philosophical stance of the institution, provide touchstones for the maintenance of institutional integrity, and serve as a guide for educational planning. It will also operate as a frame of reference for decisions about such practical matters as student admission and retention, the curriculum, the faculty, allocation of funds, etc.

It is imperative, therefore, that the varied segments of an academic community understand and realistically pursue the institution's objectives. A fundamental criterion of excellence in an institution is, in fact, the extent of awareness about its objectives among all concerned with it. The self-study process often reveals significant differences in the definitions of institutional goals by students, faculty, administrators, trustees, legislators, and community. Discussing these differences and attempting to achieve a workable synthesis of views on objectives is an invaluable part of self-study.

In re-studying its statement of objectives, an institution might begin with such questions as the specific task it is legally authorized to do and the broad purposes for which it maintains itself. It should also analyze the commitments, obligations, interests and/or limitations it has because of its sponsorship, its constituencies, or its participation in an educational system. Even more carefully, it should examine the specific objectives of each of its varied educational programs and of its general activities — expressing these objectives where possible in terms of desired performance or competency.

Discussion of such questions will require a distinction between goals and objectives. Obviously, most institutions operate in terms of certain fundamentals such as the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of information, the development of student character, and the preparation of its students to live in the world. These are long-range goals, not to be confused with objectives

realistically determined in the light of such factors as the purpose for which the institution was founded, the point of view it represents, the community in which it is located, the clientele it serves, the needs – social, cultural, and material – of its community and clientele, and the institution's resources – human, physical, and financial.

Clarification of objectives thus demands consideration of an institution's role in the immediate geographical community, in the nation, in the international community. How do contemporary social concerns at all these levels affect its objectives, here and now?

Projection into the future is also important. What implications have the institution's objectives for developments during the next five or ten years? A clear statement of purpose should provide a basis for long-range plans about every aspect of an institution's life, in order to ensure development consistent with its basic orientation. The need for (or the functioning of) formal structures for long-range educational planning is also an important aspect of analysis of objectives.

**B. Outcomes (Educational Effectiveness)**

Through the use of reasonably sophisticated instruments and procedures, as well as through some fairly traditional techniques, an institution can now evaluate more accurately its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. The systematic study of outcomes is a constant need; and continuous effort should be made to analyze the impact of such factors as the formal instructional program, the general institutional environment, public service, research programs, etc., and then to use the resulting information to improve the program. In comprehensive self-study an institution should examine the procedures it uses for on-going evaluation year by year of its educational effectiveness, the assignment of responsibility for this evaluation, the use to which its findings are put, the need for additional procedures for the collection of outcomes information.

Data from traditional sources are too often not systematically analyzed. Practical conclusions leading to action can in most instances be drawn from analysis of cumulative records of grade distributions, other student evaluation practices, choice of major fields, attrition studies, performance records of students admitted in special programs, etc. Evidence that co-curricular activities contribute to attaining the institution's objectives should also be sought. Academic and professional qualifications of students at graduation should be compared with comparable measurements taken at their admission and at check-points throughout their years of study. Follow-up studies about the success of graduates in advanced studies or in employment and about their views of the strengths and weaknesses of their preparation can throw valuable light on how an institution is achieving its objectives.

**C. Program**

The program of an institution is here considered as the entire body of plans and operations the institution offers in support of its objectives, including both instructional and non-instructional activities. There must always be a demonstrable relationship between stated objectives and the actual program.

The curriculum, designed to reach institutional objectives while meeting the needs of the students and of society, is central. In studying its curriculum, an institution addresses itself to the task of making explicit the curricular theory which underlies it. Existing degree requirements, courses and other learning experiences should clearly be designed to implement this theory. Methods for adapting the curriculum to the needs of individual students also require scrutiny; among these might be the use of differing instructional approaches and course formats. Current academic offerings should also be examined to discover what relationship, if any, they bear to those of other institutions; practical possibilities for institutional cooperation may need to be explored.

The curriculum should be under constant evaluation of the faculty in order to ensure that modifications will be made as changes in the educational situation require. In comprehensive self-study an institution will examine such matters as: the process through which its academic programs evolve and are changed; the location of authority to approve changes; the effectiveness of recent curricular studies and/or innovations; the impact of local or regional needs and resources on course offerings; the effects of marked changes in the abilities of entering students; the impact on the effectiveness of the program of a bargaining contract, if one exists, etc.

For institutions which sponsor off-campus programs in the United States or abroad, self-study will require (and for the Commission's purposes must include) analysis of how these programs further institutional objectives. If they parallel campus programs, how is the repetition justified and how is comparability maintained? If not, what are the objectives of the off-campus offerings and what do follow-up studies reveal about their educational effectiveness? Questions relating to the staffing, financial implications, library support, supervision of such programs must be raised and the value of such investments assessed.

An institution in comprehensive self-study should also analyze and evaluate all special programs conducted on its campus, making it clear whether they are for regularly enrolled degree candidates or are community services for non-matriculated special students. The relationships between standards in these programs and those in regular academic programs also merit examination.

An effective curriculum for graduate study should provide for the breadth of research and the stimulation of independent thinking which work on the graduate level presupposes and develops. Data concerning financial, library, faculty, and laboratory resources available for graduate work, as well as information from attrition and follow-up studies of students, are helpful in assessing the quality of a graduate program.

Curricula in technical, specialized, or professional fields should ideally reflect an institution's position on the relationship between broad education and the acquisition of techniques and skills.

### D. Students and Student Life

An important index of an institution's calibre is the appropriateness of its admissions policy as evidenced in requirements, standards and procedures. The policy must be clearly stated and related to the objectives and resources of the institution. Likewise, programs and services must be formulated in relation to the admissions policy. A college which maintains an open-door policy, for example, can be expected to have made adequate provision for testing, counseling

and compensatory services. Similarly one which has a very selective admissions policy would logically also have developed (or be developing) means of ensuring sufficient challenge and stimulus for its students. An institution should also have clearly defined the rationale for whatever decisions it has made regarding the provision of equal educational opportunity for all potential students. In any case, comprehensive self-study entails a close look at the correlation between admissions policies and educational practicies.

Study of the current student body will yield such useful data as enrollment figures, analyzed by varied relevant factors; geographic and academic origins of students, their characteristics and qualifications, etc. Provisions for systematic collection of information about entering students and for longitudinal studies of such data should be described and evaluated in comprehensive self-study, as well as the uses to which these studies are put. If its students represent a wide range of academic preparation, an institution will probably find it useful to re-examine its means of helping those with deficiencies to overcome them and of encouraging those with exceptional ability to develop it.

An institution's responsibilities to its students traditionally include provision of a well-organized program of student services extending from recruitment to placement after graduation and alumni organization. The student personnel program is ordinarily concerned with advisement, discipline, health, government, athletic and non-athletic activities, and student-faculty-administrative relationships. An institution in comprehensive self-study will usually profit from a review of the rationale, structure and effectiveness of its student services program, viewed in the context of institutional objectives.

Counseling services, both academic and personal, should also receive careful scrutiny. These include not only advisement in selection of courses, but also assistance in problems of transition from secondary school or other educational backgrounds, instruction in the methods of independent study, etc.

Close regulation of student behavior is no longer recognized as a duty or a right by most institutions. Fairness demands, however, that whatever regulations exist be realistic and clearly stated in appropriate official publications. The extent to which and the means by which students govern their own affairs, the opportunities afforded them for participation in academic planning and decision making, the institution's understanding of its obligations regarding housing and supervision of residences — all such matters should be analyzed and procedures for dealing with them evaluated in comprehensive self-study.

## E. Faculty

The fundamental contribution of the faculty to the institutional program is to supply the instruction necessary to make the curriculum effective. Clearly, in order to supply proper instruction, the faculty must consist of competent, well-educated, interested individuals, each fully prepared to accept responsibility for maintaining professional competence at a high level.

An institution's objectives define by implication the kind of faculty it needs — their educational background, professional experience, diversity, personal attitudes and commitments, interest in teaching and in research — and self-study demands thoughtful analysis of faculty in such terms. Useful data for this analysis include distribution by rank (if ranking is used), by

earned degrees (with sources of these), by length of service at the institution; number of and reasons for departures from the faculty during recent years; number of new appointments in the same period; percentage of faculty holding tenure (if tenure is used); listing of relevant professional activities and achievements, etc. by rank (if applicable). Fringe benefits should also be tabulated and evaluated. All of these data may not be presented fully in the final self-study, but their implications will be indicated.

Institutional policies and procedures governing employment of faculty are matters of special importance. How are faculty members recruited, selected, appointed? Who exercises overall quality control in faculty appointments? What machinery operates in renewal or non-renewal of contracts, in granting promotion or tenure if the institution uses academic rank or grants tenure? Where are these procedures described? These and related questions should be thoroughly reviewed in self-study.

Conditions conducive to effective faculty work are also a matter for concern. An institution will find it useful to define clearly whatever policies it has adopted regarding academic freedom, agreements on employment and renewal of contracts, leaves of absence, pensions and retirement for both teaching faculty and administrators, etc. Faculty responsibilities in regard to teaching loads, work for extra compensation, outside employment, research and/or publication also need precise definition. An institution must make clear too what office space, secretarial assistance, and equipment it makes available to its faculty.

No duty of the faculty outside of instruction ranks higher than intelligent participation in the formation of educational policies and programs and in the governance of the institution. Self-study provides an opportunity for an institution to evaluate the formal structures it employs to facilitate such faculty participation. The effectiveness of the faculty committee structure, the frequency and the purpose of full faculty meetings, the adequacy of the files of minutes for both committee and faculty meetings — these and similar indicators of faculty action are important subjects in comprehensive self-study.

**F. Teaching**

The quality of instruction offered by an institution clearly determines the benefits which students will derive from the curriculum. Instructional methods should vary with the subject matter, the effort being to evoke a response from students and to stimulate their participation in the educational process. Audio-visual materials, field trips, and other associations with illustrative real experience, as these are worked into the program, form an important part of a comprehensive look at the effectiveness of teaching.

An institution in self-study should also re-study the opportunities it offers its faculty for innovation and experimentation in teaching. It is important too to examine existing means of helping faculty to evaluate and improve their teaching, as well as those designed to give students a voice in such evaluation. The methods used for official appraisals of teaching effectiveness can also be profitably reviewed during self-study.

## G. Instructional Resources and Equipment

In self-study an institution must ascertain how well all its facilities and resources support its work. The word ***resources*** is here used to include: funds; instructional buildings; library; laboratories; athletics plant; student activity buildings; campus; residences; instructional material including library holdings, laboratory and shop equipment, audio-visual aids, etc. Analysis of the adequacy and the utilization of space, equipment, etc., as well as plans for meeting future needs, is needed.

The effectiveness of the library or the learning resources center is of paramount importance. Its collections should be appropriate and adequate to support every part of the educational program; and they should be sufficiently broad in scope, varied, and up to date throughout. It is useful in comprehensive self-study to analyze the special strengths and weaknesses of all collections.

Data on the actual use of the library are also important. Which areas are drawn upon heavily, which slightly? What does analysis of library usage suggest about teaching methods and their effectiveness? These and similar questions, as well as general circulation and acquisition figures, yield valuable insights into library usage. Both students and faculty should be polled too in self-study in order to discover their assessments of the effectiveness of library services on the campus.

Use may depend heavily on easy availability of materials. Analysis of current arrangements for reading space, equipment, hours of service, reference help, etc. will yield useful data on this matter.

How rapidly and in what direction the library or the learning resources center is increasing its resources is another important question. Plans for meeting future needs should be made or existing ones re-examined; the extent to which cooperation with neighboring libraries is possible or desirable, for example, bears examination when an institution is attempting to project future lines of development.

Interaction between faculty and librarians should provide effective means for faculty participation in library development, as well as for librarians' participation in academic life, curriculum planning, budget construction, etc.

## H. Organization and Governance

***Organization*** is used here to denote the set of line and staff interrelationships which an institution uses to attain its objectives. Not all institutions will have the same organizational plan; rather each should develop the structures that work best in its particular situation. Relevant sources of information on how an institution's organization is structured are its By-Laws; the chart of organization; the faculty manual; the student handbook; the minutes of the governing board, of the faculty, of faculty committees, and of administrative committees; conversations with administrative personnel. Comprehensive self-study involves critical examination of these and all documents describing the responsibilities, procedures, and working rules for each unit in the organizational structure.

The overall control and support of the organizational plan are the responsibility of the Board of

Trustees, the legally constituted agency through which an institution expresses itself on matters of basic policy. Determination of policy, rather than its execution, is the proper function of the Board.

Many factors must be taken into account in evaluating the structure of a governing board. What are the stipulations for board membership, and are changes in these being contemplated? How are new members chosen? Is the size of the board conducive to effective operation and to adequate involvement of all members? What provisions exist for replacing inactive members, for rotation or retirement?

Other important considerations regarding a board's effectiveness include the scope of experience and relationships presented by its members, the age and length-of-service distributions of the group, the attendance record at board meetings over a number of years. The methods a board uses for maintaining accurate knowledge of faculty and student thinking should be examined, as should be its means of obtaining reports on program effectiveness.

The administrative staff is the executive agency for the institutional plan. Procedures for choosing such officers as department chairmen, deans, provosts, vice presidents and presidents can profitably be re-evaluated during self-study. The president of the institution is responsible under the trustees for the implementation of the organizational plan, the staffing and maintenance of the institution, effective uses of the support accorded by the trustees, and direction of the institution for the attainment of its objectives. In assessing the effectiveness of its administration, an institution should check the degree to which all those involved in this work understand their responsibilities for action and interaction. These should be accurately described in the relevant official documents of the institution.

The participation of faculty and students in governance is another question meriting attention. Is there a council, senate, comparable body which assists the president? If so, who comprise it? What are its functions? How does it relate to a bargaining unit, if one exists? How frequently does it meet? These and similar questions can be profitably raised about every unit in an organizational plan.

## I. Financial Planning

For assessing an institution's fiscal status, the following materials are helpful: 1) a description of the procedures and the time schedule used in budget preparation; 2) the operating statement, balance sheet, and budget summary for the past fiscal year; 3) a summary of the nature and the amount of the institution's indebtedness; 4) a table of the annual surplus or deficit for each of the past five fiscal years; 5) total of annual fees and charges for full-time students, a record of changes in these fees over the past few years, and a projection of contemplated future changes; 6) budget projections of income and expenditures for the next several years.

It is also helpful to look at the budget in terms of its past, present, and future. What significant additions or deletions can be noted over the past several years in current income, endowment, plant, equipment, etc.? What present operating problems are of pressing importance? What plans are being made for continuing the improvement of resources in the light of current program plans for the next few years?

## PART III

## MATERIALS RELEVANT TO INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

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**GENERAL**

***Institutional Self-Study.*** American College Testing Program, Inc. Iowa City, Iowa.

***Instruments and Procedures for the Evaluation of Vocational/ Technical Education Institutions and Programs.*** American Vocational Association, Washington, D.C.

**GOALS**

***Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI).*** Institutional Research Program in Higher Education, Educational Testing Service (ETS), Princeton, New Jersey.

**CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

***Institutional Functioning Inventory (IFI).*** A measurement of faculty and administrative perceptions of an institution; developed jointly by the Institute of Higher Education at Columbia University and by ETS; available from the Institutional Research Program in Higher Education, ETS, Princeton, New Jersey.

***Faculty Characteristics Questionnaire.*** Useful in studying faculty attitudes toward such topics as student participation in governance, the reward structures, the directions of educational change, etc.; developed by Robert Wilson and Jerry Goff of the Berkeley Center for Research and Development in Higher Education.

***College and University Environment Scales (CUES).*** A measurement of student perceptions of campus environment; developed by Robert Pace of UCLA and distributed through the Institutional Research Program in Higher Education, ETS, Princeton, N.J. (Revised form called ***CUES II.***)

***College Characteristics Index (CCI).*** Developed by George Stern at Syracuse University; similar to ***CUES.***

***Student Instructional Report (SIR).*** A ten-minute form developed by ETS for student evaluation of instruction.

***Student Reactions to College (SRC).*** Evaluative rather than descriptive; asks students to react to a wide range of institutional services and programs, Institutional Research Program in Higher Education, ETS, Princeton, N.J.

**STUDENT INPUT**

***ACE Questionnaire.*** Intended to describe the characteristics of entering freshmen; administered for a nominal fee by the Office of Research of the American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.

***College Student Questionnaire (CSQ).*** Part I (for freshmen); Part II (for upper classmen). A measurement of student characteristics, more extensive than the ***ACE Questionnaire,*** and useful for describing groups of students; the two parts make growth studies possible; Institutional Research Program in Higher Education, ETS, Princeton, N.J.

***Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI).*** A measurement of student attitudes and values; developed at the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education; available from the Psychological Corporation, 304 E. 45th St., New York, N.Y.

***ACT Research Services*** publishes a profile of entering students, similar to ***ACE Questionnaire.*** They also have an Institutional Self-Study Service to which institutions can subscribe.

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

***College Level Examination Program (CLEP).*** Developed with the broad purpose of establishing a national system of awarding college credit by examination, ***CLEP*** is proving useful for both traditional and non-traditional students. The ***General Examinations*** provide a comprehensive measure of undergraduate achievement in five basic areas of liberal arts; the ***Subject Examinations*** measure achievement in specified undergraduate courses; information available from CEEB Regional Office, 65 East Elizabeth Avenue, Bethlehem, Pa. 18018, or from CLEP, Box 1821, ETS, Princeton, N.J.

***Undergraduate Program for Counseling and Evaluation (UP).*** To provide information about undergraduate student achievement and aptitude, and for curriculum evaluation. The ***UP*** offers 34 examinations which are especially suitable at the junior and senior class level and which can be used to measure student progress toward general educational goals or some degree of specialization in a particular field of study. This program replaced the Graduate Record Examination Institutional Testing Program in October, 1969 and is available from ETS, Princeton, N.J.

***Survey of College Achievement (SCA).*** Designed to describe groups or institutions, not to assess individuals; provides group measures of academic achievement in five basic areas of the liberal arts; ETS, Princeton, N.J.

***College Outcomes Measurement Project (COMP).*** American College Testing Program, Inc., Iowa City, Iowa.